

Appendix A – Comments and Responses to Comments

The BLM received 8 comment emails or letters to consider on the “draft” EA. All comments the BLM received were reviewed and categorized. Although not required for an EA by regulation, an agency may respond to *substantive* and *timely* comments received (BLM 2008).

Substantive comments:

1. question, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information in the EA;
2. question, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of, methodology for, or assumptions used for the environmental analysis;
3. present new information relevant to the analysis;
4. present reasonable alternatives other than those analyzed in the EA; and/or
5. cause changes or revisions in one or more of the alternatives.

No response is necessary for non-substantive comments (BLM 2008).

#	Comment	BLM Response
1	Public commenter. Raised concerns about the authorization of a new R&PP Lease when the Buckeye Hills Recreation Area improvements have yet to be completed by Maricopa County Department of Parks and Recreation.	The commenter expressed an opinion that does not address the direct, indirect of cumulative effects from the proposals, as such it is outside the scope of the analysis.
2	Public commenter. Commented that the area for R&PP Lease would no longer be available to recreational hunting and disperse camping.	The BLM has revised the environmental assessment and described that the lease of the 1,046 acres of BLM-lands would result in those areas being no longer available for hunting, however hunting would continue to be available on BLM-lands surrounding the lease areas.
3	Public commenter. Stated that there is a lack of attention and patrol on other parks operated by Maricopa County Department of Parks and Recreation.	The commenter expressed an opinion that does not address the direct, indirect of cumulative effects from the proposals, as such it is outside the scope of the analysis.
4	Public commenter. Stated appreciation for other parks and areas for recreation and considers the project worthy of development.	Comment noted.
5	Public commenter. Recommended that campsites should be angled in the direction of travel, not perpendicular to the roadway. This would make for easier vehicle maneuvering,	Comment noted.
6	Public commenter. Concerns with the entry road into private mine ¼ mile south of a [unspecified] lease parcel. Approval of lease would cause increased traffic along [unspecified] mine access road and repair cost (paid by miner) would increase.	Access to unpatented mining claims on BLM-lands does not involve the granting of an exclusive use right-of-way by the BLM, and there is no means to control or prevent casual use from occurring on such route.

#	Comment	BLM Response
7	Public commenter. Expressed concerns about recreation management in the area and how the fees will relate to the County management of the R&PP Lease area. Will there be multiple fees?	The only existing fee for use of BLM-lands is that as a part of a Special Recreation Permit, or in a few developed recreation areas not in the VRM Project area. Under the R&PP lease issued by the BLM, Maricopa County Department of Parks and Recreation would be able to charge fees, whether for entry, camping, day use etc. within the two lease areas.
8	Public commenter. Questioned how does closing multiple routes fit the scope of the Resource Management Plan?	The BLM has revised Section 1.5 of the environmental assessment to indicate that the project is in conformance with the lands and realty objectives of the Resource Management Plan. As an R&PP Lease area, the primary law governing use of the two lease areas is the R&PP Act. When the BLM classified the two lease areas in November 2016, the primary law governing use was no longer the Federal Land and Policy Management Act.
9	Public commenter. Recommended the park should include dark sky provisions and be recognized by the International Dark Sky Association.	Comment noted.
10	Public commenter. Stated the County should be getting the land from the State, BLM land belongs to the people.	The commenter expressed an opinion that does not address the direct, indirect or cumulative effects from the proposals, as such it is outside the scope of the analysis.
11	Arizona Game and Fish Department. Would like Maricopa County to coordinate all construction with them to ensure the culverts and bridge facilitate wildlife movement across Vulture Mine Road.	Comment noted.
12	Arizona Game and Fish Department. Questioned if the perimeter fencing is intended to exclude wildlife or allow passage of wildlife?	The style of the fencing (barbed wire or pipe rail) has not been determined. The purpose of the fencing is to assist with managing public access into and out of the recreation facilities.
13	Arizona Game and Fish Department. Stated there is a wildlife water west of campground. An increase in off-highway vehicle (OHV) traffic is anticipated there. Wildlife use of the water should be monitored and if adversely affected by OHV use, the water should be relocated by Maricopa County.	Comment noted.